In Their Own Words

We sometimes do surveys of the kids who receive Project SAM (Share A Meal) weekend bags to make sure everything is going well with the program. It’s so moving to read through the comments and see the answers in the kids’ own writing. Here are a few highlights from last year’s surveys (with a little help deciphering some that might be hard to figure out).

What’s most important to you about getting Project SAM bags?

- So it’s $ for fam
- Food and Drinks
- That there is nuff food for my fam

(That there is enough food for my family.)

How does the food in Project SAM bags help you?

- Protein
- It helps me because when we don’t have anything in the fridge then I can get food from the bag.
- Keep me Helthy. hlfy fode
- (Keeps me healthy.)
- (Healthy food.)
- I shar the food with my sists
- I shar the food with my sis

(Saves us money because we are poor.)
(It helps us survive.)

Any other comments: Awesome

Fall 2017 Newsletter

Project SAM provides bags of food to children who might otherwise be hungry on the weekend. There is enough food for 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches, with extra provided for long weekends and vacations. The food is either ready to eat or easy to prepare and as nutritionally balanced as possible based on the food available to us through Feed My People Food Bank. Thanks to grant support we are able to ensure that each bag always has two servings of fruit even if it’s necessary to purchase that at retail costs.

With a poverty rate of 16.3% Dunn County is among the poorest counties in the state. Over 42% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. This means their families live at or below 185% of poverty level which puts them at risk of hunger. (185% of poverty level is an income of $3,793 or below per month for a family of 4.)

Project SAM bags are packed each week by volunteers at Stepping Stones and distributed through ten local schools to children of all ages from Head Start through high school. At the start of this school year we’re already serving 373 kids, and the number typically increases throughout the year.

But the good news, in the kids’ own words, is that they’re getting ‘enuff hlfy fode,’ that they can sometimes ‘shar’ it, and that Project SAM ‘savs’ money for their family! We also think that’s AWESOME! :)

![Image of children with Project SAM bags]
Come enjoy a glass of wine or other beverage at the Barrel Room, 320 Main St. E., Menomonie. It will be a ‘guest server night’ and all cash tips will go to Stepping Stones. Servers will include Stepping Stones staff, board members and local “celebrities”. Bring your friends or colleagues for Happy Hour! Enjoy some music and conversation. The Barrel Room also has tasty appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages.

Farewell to Jane
Jane Redig has retired! We’re so grateful for her many years of service and will surely miss her. Help us wish her well by joining us at the Barrel Room (details below) for Stepping Stones Guest Server Night. Jane will be one of the servers and we’ll make sure she has plenty of time to mingle!

Stepping Stones’ Night at the Barrel Room
Wednesday
Oct. 18, 6 - 9 p.m.
Come enjoy a glass of wine or other beverage at the Barrel Room, 320 Main St. E., Menomonie. It will be a ‘guest server night’ and all cash tips will go to Stepping Stones. Servers will include Stepping Stones staff, board members and local “celebrities”. Bring your friends or colleagues for Happy Hour! Enjoy some music and conversation. The Barrel Room also has tasty appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages.

Welcome Jill
We’re happy to welcome Jill Seichter as the new Community Connections Program Coordinator. Jill might look familiar as she interned at Stepping Stones several years ago while completing her Social Work degree and has since been working at Dunn Co. Human Services. She has also served on the Stepping Stones board. Because of her familiarity with Stepping Stones and the Dunn County community she has already ‘hit the ground running’!

Hooray for Fresh Produce!
Thanks so much to all the farmers and gardeners who donated produce to the pantry this summer and fall. Because of all this bounty, as well as being able to get free produce from Feed My People Food Bank, we’re able to offer more/less unlimited quantities through the pantry and even have an extra weekly distribution time just for produce throughout the harvest season.

SAVE the DATE for EMPTY BOWLS!
Sat., Feb. 24th at MHS!
Mark your calendars for the 2018 Empty Bowls which will be held at Menomonie High School, Sat., Feb. 24, 11 am—2 pm. Beautiful bowls, yummy soup, wonderful community spirit, and lots more. Details in the next newsletter and on-line closer to the event. Hope to see you there!

Cooperative Breakfast
Enjoy the waffles once again at the annual Co-op Breakfast to be held Sat., Oct. 28, 8—11 am at Dunn Energy. The event includes a food and funds drive for Stepping Stones. Thanks to all our great local co-ops and their members.
Winter Haven — Ways to Help

VOLUNTEER & SPREAD THE WORD!!

Winter Haven season will be here soon and we need your help! The shelter can sleep up to 10 people per night. There are 2 volunteer shifts per night and 2 volunteers are needed for each shift— 7:30 pm - 1:30 am & 1:30 am - 7:30 am. Duties include: checking guests in, serving coffee & snacks, ensuring everyone is settled for the night and awakened in the morning, setting out breakfast foods, and tidying up.

Training Session Options for NEW Volunteers:

Mon, Oct 30, 6-7 pm  
Thurs, Nov 2, 6:30-7:30 pm  
Sat, Nov 4, 10-11 am

Tues, Nov 7, 6:30-7:30 pm  
Thurs, Nov 9, 6:30-7:30 pm

Update Session for RETURNING Volunteers:

Thurs, Oct 26th, 6 - 7 pm

Please contact Stepping Stones Shelter Coordinator Heidi Hooten to register and indicate which session you’ll attend: 715.235.2920, x7, shelter@steppingstonesdc.org.

We also need help spreading the word about the need for volunteers.

Please tell your friends, family, colleagues, church groups, civic organizations, etc.! If there are no volunteers to take a shift the shelter must close and we don’t want that! Volunteers must be 18 or older.

What Will Your Legacy Be?

Including Stepping Stones in your estate plan is a way to ensure that the support provided to the organization in the past continues into the future.

Planned gifts will ensure the long term mission and operation of Stepping Stones, allowing us to provide food assistance to the greater numbers of Dunn County residents we now reach and those in need we haven’t yet reached.

Our shelters will remain ready to receive those who find themselves homeless, and provide other services to help them along the “stepping stones” back to self-sufficiency.

Your gift can also provide you with tax advantages as well as ensuring that more of your estate goes to the heirs you choose.

Types of planned gifts include:

- designating an amount or percentage of your estate in your will, making Stepping Stones a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement plan (IRA, 401K, etc.), setting up a charitable trust, or making a gift of real estate.

Become a member of Stepping Stones’ Keystone Society by making a planned gift today! The keystone is the critical stone at the top of the arch on which the others depend for support.

Please contact us for more information or to let us know you’ve already arranged or are considering a planned gift: 715.235.2920, director@steppingstonesdc.org.
Thank you for your support of Stepping Stones.

Stepping Stones Discount Cards — Only $10
Most discounts are 10% off all purchases so it quickly pays for itself & it's reusable!

Cards are good through August 2017.

Please send me __________ Discount Cards at $10 each plus $1 handling (per order not per card). Total enclosed: $ ______________ .

Name: ______________________________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________________________
City: __________________________________________________________________________________
State: _______________________________________________________________________________
Zip: _____________________________
Telephone: ___________________________________________________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________________________________________

Welcoming these new vendors:

Stepping Stones Discount Card Order Form

Stop by the Stepping Stones Office to purchase, order online at www.steppingstonesdc.org or use the form here and the enclosed envelope. Great for birthday gifts & stocking stuffers.

Thanks to the following businesses offering savings on the Stepping Stones Discount Cards.

Acoustic Café
Advance Auto Parts
Cancun Mexican Grill
Circle C
Dairy Queen
Denny’s
Duke & Dagger
Erberts & Gerberts
Exit 45 Restaurant
Log Jam
Marion’s Legacy
Raw Deal
Tabby Catfe
Topper’s Pizza
Waterfront Bar & Grill

All proceeds support the programs of Stepping Stones: the food pantry, homeless shelters, and Community Connections support services program.

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State: _______________________________________________________________________________
Zip: _____________________________
Telephone: ___________________________________________________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________________________________________